

County Councillor Report August 2026

LGR on hold

The big news for both NCC and District councils across Norfolk is that on Monday 7 September, the government announced it would be 'pausing' local government reorganisation.

That means that the plan to abolish NCC and the district councils and reorganising local government in Norfolk under three geographic unitary bodies has been put on ice and unless and until the government decide to revive the idea, things will remain as they are.

There will not be elections to shadow authorities next year as planned but the elections of new district councillors will take place in May 2027. A week prior to the government change of plan, NCC had terminated a £6.3million contract with external consultants brought in by the previous administration to advise on LGR.

Similar to most government bodies, August was a relatively quiet month for NCC. That said, there has been some activity and of course residents and Parish Councils are welcome to raise issues directly with me at any time.

One important event requiring an unscheduled full council meeting was the selection and appointment of Dennis Bacon as the new CEO following the resignation of Tom McCabe earlier in the summer.

Village signage.

I am awaiting a response from the NCC cabinet member for highways on new signage for Marlingford. I had hoped this would come in time for the September PC meeting but so far it has not. I will pursue this with Tom Dickerson and NCC officers.

Other things that may be of interest are detailed below.

Pothole repairs

Residents may have noticed that a range of repairs and resurfacing work has been taking place across the county. This is the usual summer schedule but in addition, Norfolk County Council will trial an innovative pothole repair machine as part of ongoing work to improve road maintenance and keep Norfolk's highways in the best possible condition. The trial will take place during the first week of September on planned repairs in South Norfolk.

The machine and operator are being provided at no cost to the Council for this short trial. If this short trial is successful, a longer-term trial will be arranged.

Flu Vaccinations - NHS Norfolk & Suffolk Integrated Care Board

The NHS is beginning preparations for winter flu vaccinations earlier than usual.

Early booking is intended to help protect vulnerable residents and reduce pressure on local NHS services during the winter period.

The national booking system is open for eligible adults to pre-book a flu vaccination appointment at a local community pharmacy. Pregnant women and some other eligible groups can receive their vaccination from 1 September, while most eligible adults will be vaccinated from 1 October.

From September, local NHS services will contact eligible residents through GP practices, the NHS App or by letter. Eligible adults do not need to wait for an invitation before booking through the national system.

Residents can check eligibility and book via the NHS flu vaccine webpage.

<https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine/>

Electricity bill discounts for households living near new pylons

The Government has announced that households living within 500 metres of new or significantly upgraded electricity transmission infrastructure, such as pylons, may receive up to a £250 annual discount on their electricity bills for 10 years.

An initial list of 40 projects expected to be eligible for the Bill Discount Scheme has been published. Some listed projects have not received planning consent or are still going through an appeals process. A project will only qualify if it has received all required approvals and construction has started.

The list of expected eligible projects includes several schemes proposed for Norfolk:

- Norwich to Tilbury- a new network of pylons and cables
- Eastern Green Link 3 and 4 converter station – a convertor station in the Walpole area of Norfolk
- Grimsby to Walpole – an overhead power line between Lincolnshire and North Norfolk.

If the schemes are approved, eligible households are expected to receive the discount automatically. If any action is required, further information will be provided by the Government or Ofgem, as scheme administrator.

New social homes for Norwich

Work has started on a major east Norwich scheme to deliver 127 new social rent homes on a former County Council brownfield site, with investment of up to £40 million.

The scheme will increase affordable housing, provide specialist accommodation, make use of brownfield land and support better value adult social care.

It includes 77 homes for people aged 55 and over eligible for care and support, 22 supported living homes for adults with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and autistic people, and 28 family homes.

The older people's housing will include 54 one-bedroom and 23 two-bedroom wheelchair-accessible apartments, with shared facilities including a café, hairdresser, spa bathroom, guest suite and communal garden. Supported living will comprise 12 apartments and 10 bungalows, with on-site support from Places for People.

Norfolk County Council is contributing £5.5 million through its Independent Living and Supported Living capital programmes. Places for People and Homes England will fund the remainder. The scheme is expected to save around £1.2 million a year by reducing demand for residential care.

Disabled people to get free 24 hour travel on buses

It has been announced that from April 2027, disabled individuals in England will be able to use their free bus passes at any time, as the Government removes existing weekday restrictions. This change aims to improve access to transport for disabled people, helping them with work, education, and healthcare.

Regards

Malcolm Latache